

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN OUT AND AT HOME.

"A Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her."—Prov. xxxi.



"MRS. BETTY BARGAIN.—THE DANGEROUS LOVE OF CHEAPNESS."

MRS. BETTY BARGAIN;

or, THE

DANGEROUS LOVE OF CHEAPNESS.

By the Author of "*The Poetry of Home and Childhood*," "*The Return of the Swallow*," &c. &c.

BARGAIN by name, and bargaining by nature, was the butcher's wife, in the chief street of our little London suburb. First of herself; secondly, of her bargains. She was a moderately stout woman, with a comely face—red and white, like her own good beef. Round her brows was a close cap, well decked with small blue bows; a tight high brown dress was fronted by an apron so white and clean, that it might have replaced a damask table cloth upon an emergency. Her time was much occupied in the shop: oftener at the little walnut-painted desk up in the corner, where the account of chops and steaks, and sirloins and saddles, and necks and shoulders, was kept in that peculiar abbreviated style in which many tradesmen delighted. Sometimes, however, when both master and man were out, she condescended to sever with the shining knife, the prime slice from the rump. Always so neat and prim and brisk-looking, she was an ornament to the shop. Even bluff Mr. Bargain himself said, as she appeared therein on Monday mornings, with fresh white collar and apron, that she was its best piece of furniture. Nor did Mrs. Betty neglect her husband. Brightly blue was his butchering coat; well got up and carefully folded his red neckerchief; neatly darned his grey worsted hose, and curiously fine-drawn every little rent that occurred to any portion of his outer raiment. Well, too, she knew, when summer was sultry and flies frequent, how by pepper and preparation, to save from waste those bits of prime which co-operators had not carried off, nor blinds, wire covers, or bird-nest switchers preserved. Well, too, she kept at her duty her thin little servant-of-all-work, Ann Artichoke, who had an hour's walk every Sunday evening to herself, and no followers allowed. In fact, Mrs. Betty Bargain was a moral miracle—most respectable woman in the general relations of life. Alas, however, there was one exception: most certainly she had one fault: there was a flaw in her china-vase after all. Alas! as ever, this one fault, as it were, retracted infinitesimally in all the colours of the prism, still keeps the sinners in an atmosphere of mystery above the saints.

What was this one fault of Mrs. Bargain's? Will the political economists allow us to call it, the sin of buying cheap and selling dear? May we say she wished to make good markets, and to find easy ones? Not exactly so. She liked her meat to fetch its price, but she was not extortionate. A fair return, was the maxim with which each night she pressed the pillow. Quick sales, and small profits, she said, best turned over the money. Her sin, then, was not in selling at the dearest market; it was rather in buying at the cheapest. Not in the trade, however,—the master managed the Smithfield himself. Still Mrs. Betty had many purchases of her own to make; in these her lame foot showed its limp; on that side, the mirror displayed its crack. The truth must out—Mrs. Bargain was so fond of cheapening, and chaffering and bargaining; and buying things for such a very little money. This was her one fault.—What is ours?

One fine morning, before her husband had returned from Smithfield, Mrs. Betty was taking the air at her shop door. She had scarcely been there time enough to see that the lodger at first floor No. 23 was up, and that the buterman's was opening, when straight towards her crossed over the road a gentleman, with a well polished brass-bright mahogany case under his arm.

"By a watch, marn?" said the Jew, opening his case, and holding it before her.

"A watch, indeed!" replied Mrs. Bargain, drawing back. "I am a tradesman's wife as knows her position, and is satisfied with a good going eight-day clock in her house, and wants no watches by her side."

"No offence, marn, I 'ope," said the Jew, "but these hearings would be becoming."

"Don't want any," exclaimed Mrs. Bargain retiring.

"Anything in this way?" continued the Jew, following her into the shop, and producing half a dozen tea-cups in silver paper.

"Nothing at all," said the butcher's dame, looking hesitatingly at them.

"Real silver, marn, and very cheap."

"What's the price?"

"Only thirty shillings. Look at the stamp."

"Too dear—can't afford them," said Mrs. Bargain.

"Look at this half dozen, then," continued the

Jew, producing a packet of spoons of the illustrious German silver. "I can do these cheaper. Will you buy it?"

"Don't care for any this morning, thank you," said Mrs. Bargain, with her eyes eagerly fixed upon the newly purchased articles, which, although she knew to be of an inferior quality, at least looked larger than those which had preceded them, and were as bright as genuine silver.

"They are worth ten shillings of any one's money," said the Jew.

"Not of mine," said his cautious customer, now on tiptoe for what she called her beating-down plan.

"Make a bid then?" asked the cunning Israelite.

"What is your lowest?" retorted she.

"Say eight shillings—that's two off!"

"No. It's too much."

"Three half-crowns, then?"

"No. I'll give six shillings."

"Say seven shillings, and you shall have them."

"No—no higher than six."

"Take them then: I want money. They are dirt cheap, and such a bargain as you'll never get again," said the Jew; and Mrs. Bargain paid the money and began to felicitate herself upon the cheapness of her purchase.

Just at this moment, her husband returned, and the new spoons were displayed on the chopping block.

"Look at my new purchase, Bargain?" said she.

The honest butcher turned one over in his hand.

"Is this silver, my dear?"

"Silver? why yes: not of the best quality, of course; but so cheap!"

"They'll turn as yellow as butter. They are only German Silver."

"Well, I can't say what kind of silver they are; but what do you guess I gave?"

"Why, they sell at ninepence a piece. Half a dozen would be four and sixpence, at the usual price."

"You don't say so! I gave six shillings at the door."

"Done again!" laughed the honest butcher. "When will you be wise? Why don't you go to respectable shops, and not always be bargaining with pedlars?"

Sure enough the metal spoons soon began to discolour, and verified the opinion of her husband; but Mrs. Bargain was still not cured of her propensity of cheapening. She had no pleasure in dealing at shops where the prices were fixed, and reductions against the rule. In buying even a silk handkerchief for her husband, the bandanna lost its charms without bating. Cheapening she mistook for cheapness. Bargaining with the salesman misled her in buying the article. She counted the cash, but her query was not concerning the quality; consequently, her success was often her failure. In victory she was vanquished. Moreover, as Sparta taught Thebes the art of war, through frequent fighting, until at last the Theban was victorious over the Spartan, so at length did the commercial enemy become acquainted with the purchasing tactics of Mrs. Bargain, and, with strategical subtilty, put on an additional shilling to allow her the pleasure of taking it off.

Ten years had now passed—yes, ten years! Oh, that age had brought wisdom! Oh, that we grew in understanding as in stature! Alas, that we grown babes are so loth in cutting into our wisdom teeth! Ten years had passed, yet still Mrs. Bargain continued in her old course. Her eye still brightened in bating. Bargaining was both her blessing and her curse. In vain did experience teach. Prints, whose colours ran, did not clause her from cheapening. Glasses, which cracked with the master's first tumbler of grog, failed to show flaw in her plan. Thrice was she taken in traps, whose patterns assumed infinitely astonishing aspects around her hot metal teapot; and a fourth time did she allow herself to be betrayed. Still she hankered after hawkers. The pedlar knew the spring of her purse, and she was sold at all the sales she bought at. The experience of ten years even had no effect, but surely its lesson was to be learned at last.

It was about the dusk of evening that, as she was hastening home from a call upon a neighbour, and had arrived in her own street, a man touched her arm, and then tapping a large roll of oilcloth which he carried with him, said in an undertone, "Beg your pardon, mā'am, but I have a prime bargain here." The word was fascinating, and her steps hesitated. The applicant lost no chance; he shifted the roll on both arms, and presented it before her, so as in some measure to impede her passage. It is sufficient for our object that, leaving out all dialogue, the article was one that Mrs. Bargain required; that she cheapened it to a trifle—the man protesting poverty; that it was taken into the house, measured,

and found exactly to fit the passage, and that, her husband being out, she ultimately bought and paid for it, while the man hurried off.

Certainly it was cheap. It was good, too. She had not been cheated this time in quality. The pattern was pretty, presenting an imitation of chequered pavement. It was well-painted, and the colours deeply fixed. But how had the man come by it? That inquiry never entered her mind, and her husband paid little attention to the matter. The next morning Ann Artichoke, now as plump and fat as butter from ten years' service at a butcher's, went down upon her knee, and fixed it in the passage. Very neat it looked, and sure it would be noticed by Mrs. Bargain's Sunday party of friends. An hour had scarcely elapsed before a policeman quietly walked into the shop, and asked the honest butcher whether he knew a "gent" who had visited his house the previous evening.

"No one was here to my knowledge," said Mr. Bargain.

"Probably not," said the policeman, "but a man with stolen goods was traced to your door; he entered with them, and returned without them, and I have here a warrant to search your house."

It was true. "Call my wife," said the butcher to his man; and Mrs. Bargain soon appeared from the kitchen, and learned the cause of the policeman's visit.

"Oh, my!"—exclaimed the butcher's wife, turning red and purple, with large white spots in her face, "who would have thought it? I never knew it was stolen!"

"You should at least have taken some note of the suspicious circumstances under which it was offered for sale," said the policeman. "The price alone which you admit having given for it, was such as you might be sure it could not have been sold at, if it was fairly come by. As it is, I must take you for examination at the office, and the cloth, too."

Up came the cloth, and off went Mrs. Bargain wringing her hands, and weeping wofully. The poor butcher was thus condemned to see his wife taken before the magistrate. What mortification for him, honest heart as he was! What misery for her, the well-meaning, but mistaken in one matter, apparently so trifling, but really so grave! In fact, it was a serious affair. In law, the receiver is as bad as the thief. Her examination was on a charge of abetting felony; and it required all the testimonies of her friends as to her character, all the leniency of a good-humoured magistrate, under the providence of a sunny day, to release her from her durance vile. And that only was obtained by bail being given for her appearance, in case she should be required to appear in any future stage of the case, and it was also accompanied by a serious admonition from the bench, and one afterwards from her husband. The lesson, however, was at last learned, although it required a severe teaching. Mrs. Bargain ever afterwards bought at respectable shops, and avoided all those whose prices were not fixed. Hawkers were her horror. Those who wished for bating, and those who bated, became alike her abomination. She now judged of the price of an article by its quality, and ever examined it again suspiciously, if a shopman offered to bate. Many women may take warning from this little history of Mrs. Betty Bargain, and reflect, that what to-day is a bargain, may to-morrow prove a felony.

LOVE FOR OUR CHILDREN—Amidst misfortunes and reverses, in sickness, anguish, and remorse, we are often led to the children of our hearts, and love them the more in proportion as the world contums and frowns, and no other eyes save God's and our own look with compassion and forgiveness upon their weaknesses, their errors, and their adversities. The world esteems only the proud and the prosperous. It offers its incense upon the shrines of greatness, and bends a servile knee to strength and power. By the same rules it turns away from the humble, the unfortunate, and the wretched. What refuge would there then be left for many of this class, and especially the youthful and inexperienced, if nature had not provided some reliable sources of consolation, encouragement, and peace? It is not the greatness of the heartless world of gold and silver, of fashion and wealth, whom we have trusted on, to be deceived; no, it is a father or a mother's voice—which early spoke to us of love, of duty, and of heaven—which now reaches us, and would reach us, although we were cast in bondage, fettered in dungeons, or plunged in the deepest shame. It may, perhaps, be mingled with tears, and come bursting from a breaking heart; but still it aches us in the time of desolation—it welcomes us again to life—and cheers and sustains us with the glad tidings of joy, of forgiveness, and of hope.

THE
TRIALS OF A COMPLAINING
WIFE.

(FOURTH CONVERSATION BETWEEN MRS. FRETWELL AND
MRS. CANDID.)

By the Author of "Good Servants, Good Wives, and
Happy Homes," &c., &c.

On leaving the sick chamber and descending to the room below, the visitors found that Mary had been busily engaged in preparing the evening meal, against her father's return. Everything about the fire was clean, and bright, and cheery; the kettle was singing on the bar, the tea things spread in order on the table, the arm-chair placed in readiness, and a little bacon frizzling as an accompaniment to the tea. "You see how handy Mary is," said Mrs. Placid, "and how nicely she can attend to her father, and Johnny is almost as clever, for I make them all useful; while other children are playing in the rooms, the greatest delight of mine is to spend their evenings with us. They take such a delight in their books; they spend hours in reading to their father and me; even little Stephy will get on his father's knee, with his book, saying, 'Daddy, let me read to you; the nice lesson I learned at school to-day.'"

Mrs. Candid.—I hope your husband has kept well through this affliction.

Mrs. Placid.—Yes, I take as much care as possible to prevent him from being affected by it. Dear fellow, he has to work hard all the day, and he cannot afford to lose his rest at night. He has often wanted to take him turn in watching with the children when they were at the worst, but I wouldn't let him, for he is far from strong. "When I am tired, I can lie down, and rest for half an hour, but it's not so with him; when he's at work he must keep at it until the day closes, and then, that we may not get behindhand in this affliction, he does a deal of overwork. Ah! yonder he comes, bless him! he's always hastening home as soon as he can, for he says there's no place like home.

Mrs. Candid.—No wonder when you strive so much to make him comfortable.

Mrs. Placid.—To be sure I do. I should be a strange kind of a wife if I did not. If he feels happy at home, I feel quite as much so in having his company, and in seeing the children as much delighted with it as myself. When they see him coming there's such running and scampering to have the first kiss, and to be the first to tell him all the news. It's quite a scene to witness them.

Mrs. Placid hastens to the door to meet her husband.

John Placid.—Well, my lass, how are the bairns coming on? Are they still doing well?

Mrs. Placid.—Yes, they're improving fast, in another week I hope they will be able to meet you at the door.

John Placid.—Come then, let's have a kiss, one for myself, and another for them, for we owe it all to thy kind, untiring care and attention, that they're coming round so nicely; in the hands of some mothers they would all have died, most certainly. Ah! Mrs. Candid, are you here, paying one of yourself, kindly visits. Well, there's no harm in a man's kissing and praising his own wife a bit, even if there be some one like yourself standing by. If I don't much mistake, your husband often does the same thing.

Mrs. Candid.—At any rate I've seen what you do, nor can I wonder, when I think what a good wife you've got.

John Placid.—She is indeed a dear, kind, good soul. I might search a long time before I found a better. I think your husband has got one as good, but with all respect, Mrs. Candid, I don't believe a better than mine can be. It's such a pleasure to come home, for there are three things I'm always sure of—a smiling face, a hearty welcome, and a comfortable fireside. Some women are always grumbling and complaining, my lass is always content and happy. Some houses that I see are all disorder and dirt, and the bairns are always brawling and fighting; you see how it is here. A good wife has Jane been to me. Next to God, she has been my best friend, and guide, and counsellor. O! it's a great blessing when husband and wife are of one heart, and one mind, when they can minister to each other's spiritual as well as temporal wants; pray together, and sweetly walk to the house of God in company. This happiness is ours. We have had our difficulties and trials, but with God's blessing, and Jane's thrift, and prudence, and good management, we've always got through.

Mrs. Placid.—Now do please to stop, John, for if you go on at this rate, I must have my say as well. I'll certainly turn the table. I'll tell all about you. I'll let Mrs. Candid know, though she knows a good deal already, what kind of a husband you are; how industrious, and kind, and considerate you are, how sober, and careful, how—

John Placid.—Nay, nay, stop my lass, no more o' this. The fact is, Mrs. Candid, we love each other, and for this reason we delight in each other, and it's our greatest pleasure to make each other happy. We've no strife but that. At our house, thank God, we've no foul looks, nor hard words, nor bitter speeches, nor peevish gloomish tempers. Our bairns come after their mother, and when we're all well, few families are happier than ours. Many can tell of more of this world's goods, but we have peace with God, and peace in the heart, and peace in the house, and that is better far than houses or land.

Mrs. Candid.—You are quite right; without the peace you have spoken of, the world's goods and pleasures are little worth. But I must now return, for my good man will be waiting, and unless I hasten home, I shall perhaps forfeit my character as a good wife; and it will be the same with my friend here, who has come with me to see your children. So good night to you both, and love to the dear little sufferers. Tell them I shall come and see them again shortly.

On leaving the house, Mrs. Fretwell and her friend walked for some time in silence, at length the former said, "O! Mrs. Candid, my heart is almost broken. Everything I've seen and heard in yonder house has been like a glass to show me what I am, an' what I've been. An' I can't bear t' sight o' mi sen. O! what a wicked creature I've been; what a bad mother, what a bad wife, what a bad manager; it's been all bad. I see I've been going wrong all mi days, an' I've been leading my child wrong, an' have made my husband miserable besides. What must I do?"

Mrs. Candid.—I am glad that you are beginning to see things in their right light; without that there would be no hope of improvement. The past is to be lamented, deeply lamented, a great deal has been done that will have to be undone; but it is not too late to mend. There are bright and happy days before you, if you have determination enough to enter on a right course. I've seen your errors with sorrow, and have felt wifish to render you some service if I could. I thought among other things, that if I could introduce you to some one such as Mrs. Placid, and give you a specimen of a pious, loving, managing, happy family, you might see your faults, and be induced to adopt a new course of life. Now you must not take up a desponding view of your case; all that Mrs. Placid is, you may become, and your house may be rendered a scene of love, and peace, and harmony, like unto hers. The lessons you have received to night will no doubt prove humbling and painful, but they are salutary and valuable. You have been taught that religion is the true foundation of domestic happiness. You have seen how love in a family unites all hearts, and how easy and pleasant it renders every act of duty. Both these have been wanting in your case; a sad deficiency! I know nothing more pitiful or wretched in this world than a family without religion, and without love. Should you become a God-fearing woman, as I hope and pray you may, the chief cause of your past misery will be removed; you will obtain new views and feelings, new motives and springs of action, new sources of joy and strength, and instead of the gloom, and discontent, and apathy of by-gone days, you will become a bright copy of what you've just been witnessing.

Mrs. Fretwell.—Oh! Mrs. Candid, I can do nothing without your advice and help. I'm like some one in a quagmire, I can't get out bi mi sen; unless you'll help me wi both hands I'm sure I shall stick fast where I am.

Mrs. Candid.—If you're only anxious and earnest yourself to get out, I will gladly help you, as you say, with both hands. I proof that you are so, bi gin the work of reform at once, set about it with a hearty good-will, and to-morrow I will see you again, and spend an hour with you. In the mean time bring your case before God, and seek forgiveness of Him whom you have so grievously neglected and sinned against. Be not backward to confess your faults both to Him and your husband, and if you give this evidence of sincerity, rich blessings will be sure to follow. But here we must part. May this be the beginning of good days with you.

Mrs. Fretwell.—I thank you a thousand times for 't kindness you've shown me.

Mrs. Fretwell returned home with a heart heavily

oppressed. The scenes she had witnessed in the house of Mrs. Placid, so entirely the reverse of everything which her own dwelling presented, and the counsels and remarks to which she had listened, had so completely changed the current of her thoughts and feelings, that now her customary complaints and censures, instead of being directed as usual, against others, were wholly directed against herself. Her husband had been called away, to attend to some piece of work that had to be done; children were playing about, so that for a time she was left in solitude to her own reflections.

As she sat musing on the occurrences of the afternoon, she cast her eyes around, examining with a heavy sigh, "what a sorry place this looks to the nice tidy one I have just left. How is it? What's the cause of this difference?" Mrs. Placid is but a working-man's wife like myself. She's less money, and worse health than I have; the fault, then, must be in me, that's plain enough. I've been loitering when I ought to ha' been working; complaining of others when I ought to ha' been correcting my son, making my family miserable by my ill tempers, instead of promoting love and kindness bi my own example. But it's not too late to mend, an' its said, *better late than never*. What one woman can do, surely another like condition, may do also. But—then—Mrs. Placid is a good, praying woman, and before I can do like her, I unnn become like her. Ah! its there the work unnn begin. Yet I canna' mend my own heart; God alone can do that. O, may I hope that He will hear the prayer o' such a wicked creature as I am? I do remember reading i' t' Bible, when I went to t' Sunday School, "God shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper" sure enough, I'm poor, an' needy, an' helpless; then I'll try an' pray to Him. Lord, help me! Lord, tak' this wicked heart o' mine, an' make it new! Lord, help me to lead a new an' better life!" These brief and broken petitions, offered up in the simplicity and sincerity of her heart, were, doubtless, heard by Him who "saveth such as be of a contrite spirit," for they were followed by a gracious influence from above, inspiring her with views and feelings altogether new, and which ultimately led to a corresponding course of conduct, the very reverse of her former life. This will be best detailed in her own words, in the conversation which follows.

Before the two neighbours parted, at their last interview, Mrs. Candid had promised Mrs. Fretwell that she would see her again on the following day; this was done in the hope that she might strengthen any good impression that had been made upon her mind; it was, therefore, to her master of regret, that circumstances she could not control, prevented the fulfilment of her promise until the third day after. Still greater was the disappointment to Mrs. Fretwell, who was all impatience to see the friend to whom she already felt she owed so much, and to whom she had so much to relate.

* * * If the reader wishes to know the delightful change that followed, how it took place, and the happy effects it produced, we must refer to our next number.

EDITOR

MY LITTLE SISTER.

Saucy and rosy, and bright and fair;
Finding a playfellow everywhere,
Singing and dancing, and tumbling too,
Ahi! little sister, would I were you,

My little sister.

Pushing away my "scratches old pen,"
Bidding me "play wi' Winnie agen,"
Rumpling my hair with caressing hands,
Braiding my will in soft love's own band,

My little sister,

Bidding "old passy" stand on her tail,
Highly delighted that pussy should fail;
Clapping her hands at the bird's blithe song,
Living in sunshine the whole day long,

My little sister.

AFTER.

She is dead, our little sister, Long ago;
Ever since our hearts have missed her,

But we know that her joy doth evermore increase—

That we need not bid her rest in peace,

It is we who need it rather, We who go
Through the storm cloud, ever farther,
Blind and slow,

But we know the darkness will decrease,

And we, too, shall safely "rest in peace."

SADIE.

The British Workwoman, OUT AND AT HOME.

"I BELIEVE THAT ANY IMPROVEMENT WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE MOTHERS, WOULD EFFECT A GREATER AMOUNT OF GOOD THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS YET BEEN DONE."—Earl Shaftesbury.

SOCIAL DEPENDENCE.

THE wisdom of God is abundantly manifest in all our relations to each other. "It is not good for man to dwell alone." And therefore is he surrounded by all the pleasant and softening influences of the Home and Hearth—of family ties, and social rights; therefore, around the Homes in which he dwells, cluster such fond thoughts and happy memories, such high resolves and holy duties.

It is time that we banished from our thoughts the idea that life is a sombre and a dreary thing, a time given over to the harsh hands of sorrow, and care, and disappointment. It is intended by the great Author of it, to be bright and beautiful, and happy; replete with a thousand joys, tended with a multiplicity of affections. But we cannot find all this joy of life in ourselves, *we are dependent one upon the other* for all that can make the days pleasant and the years full of good. We may not wrap ourselves in the mantle of selfishness, and consider that we are beholden to no others for our necessities. However proudly we may think of ourselves, as individuals, we are surprisingly helpless. Only "Union is strength." As nations, as citizens, as members of families we are dependent one upon another.

Many claims arise out of our social dependence. We must give as well as take. It will not do to expect others to watch for our needs and wishes, while we refuse to give to them the tender solicitude which we desire for ourselves. Those households are the happiest ones where every member contributes to the general good; where the children and the parents are as willing to recognize the claims of others as their own.

The father is dependent. Although he is the head and governor, although the means of subsistence come through his hands, and he is the law giver at home, still his wife, and his sons and daughters can make him either happy or miserable, according to the bent of their characters and pursuits. If there be a clean and cheerful house, well cooked meal with clean knives and forks, and shiny plates, if there be a smile on the face of his wife, and a few merry words from his blooming daughters, how light is the man's heart, how easily he forgets the toils of the day in the pleasures of the evening. But if on the other hand his comfort be disregarded at home, if he is teased by graphic descriptions of all the little vexations which have come in his absence, if he is scolded for being late, blamed for having accidentally torn his coat, and so on, he cannot be a happy man, though his negotiations in the world shall have been eminently successful. The father's dependence should be greatly respected and provided for.

The mother is dependent. Is not her life full of care, and too conversant with sorrow? With what thoughtful brow does she step about the home in which she is the light and life, and gladness. All the responsibility of the training of the children devolves upon her. She is the nurse and manager, the doctor and the comforter,

she is, in fact, everything, at home. But for her own personal happiness, she is dependent upon the kindness and thoughtfulness of the other members of the family. If her husband is angry, and peevish, and discontented, sneering at "woman's work," as if his alone were difficult and hard, finding fault with everything, and praising nothing, she may be a good woman, but she cannot be a very happy one. If her daughters are always dressing finely, and going about the streets, without trying to lighten her cares; if her sons expect her to clean their shoes, and wait upon them, while she is weak and weary, and they are robust and strong, she is a very ill-used woman, although she never utters a word of complaint. As all are so dependent upon the mother, all should strive to contribute to her happiness in every possible way.

The brother is dependent. How much he requires of food and attention and amusement.

and wise advice by helping, and encouraging her in all that is good, by pleasantly and courteously deprecating all that is wrong.

It must be confessed that some self-denial is required always to meet cheerfully and promptly, the needs and wishes of others. If we want a motive, and this is not the highest that might actuate us, let us remember that our attentions will not be needed long. A little while, and those whom we love will not depend upon us any longer. Soon they will be wrapped away from our sight, in the arms of death. And then, O what we would not give to have no misgivings, no regrets, but to feel that we were kind and attentive, and self-sacrificing to the departed.

CHAPTERS ABOUT THE WORKS OF GOD.

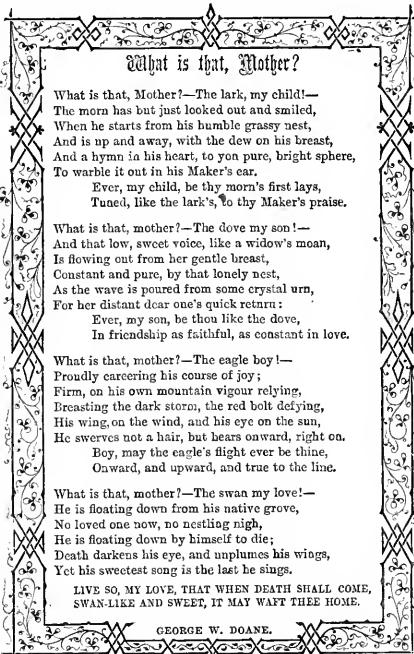
CHAPTER IV.

PLANTS; OR, THE EARTH'S CARPET.

Is not the earth made beautiful by the plants and the trees which grow all over it. How different it would be if the hills rose up quite bare and dry, and the fields and valleys had nothing to cover the hard and barren rock. But now, wherever we look, there are beautiful green woods and herbs, and quantities of rich green cover the ground like a soft carpet of many shades of color. The way in which all these plants live and grow is very wonderful, and quite worth thinking about a little.

We will first see what part the root bears in the life of the plant. It stretches down firmly into the earth and fixes the plant there, so that it cannot be blown about and destroyed. It also sucks up the water from the soil, and with the water, whatever substances it may hold dissolved in it, which will help to nourish the plant. The stem is the road by which the plant and all its parts are able to reach the top of the plant, and enable it to put forth buds and leaves. But how does it travel down in the plant? The root, stem, leaves, and every part of the plant is formed of tiny little hollow parts called cells, which contain within them a rather thick fluid. All plants; the tall trees and the small herbs and vegetables and the beautiful flowers of the garden, are alike formed of these little cells. Generally they are round, but sometimes they are long shaped, and sometimes elongated; as new ones are constantly formed, it grows. The outer green skin of the leaf is formed of flat cells, and it is these, which, in the nettle, contain the juice which irritates us so when we squeeze it. Now it is on the cells of which the whole plant is formed, that its life and growth depend. They have to receive the water and other nourishment from the soil and the air, and pass it up through the plant to feed it and keep it healthy. The water mixes with the thin fluid in the cells which is called sap, and this sap, which passes upwards from one to the other through the stem, till it reaches the leaves and blossoms of the plant. When the plant has drawn in more water than it needs, it gives it out again to the air through the leaves.

And now we will look at the leaves and see what they do. Light and air are necessary for their life, therefore they grow on those parts of the plant which live above the ground. It is only by being in contact with the air, that they help to preserve the health of the plant, for, as I just said, it is through them that the air draws off the moisture which the plant does not require, and which is more than it needs. But how do they do this? Just in this way. The leaf is covered on the outside with an immense number of very small holes, little mouths; and it is through these that the air sucks up the moisture. The air will drink up from all the mouths in the leaves of one tree in ten hours, as much as fifteen pints of water. Now you see why houses must be damp which are very near a great number of trees. This is one of the ways in which the air is supplied with moisture, to form clouds and pour down the rain again when the earth is dry. The flowers and trees when they have received the blessing from the air, give back what they do not need, that it may be carried away to do good to other places. When the air has drawn off the excess of moisture from the leaves, the sap or fluid in the cells begins to fill down again through the plant, to nourish it and make it grow. But the mouths in the leaves do even more than give out on the water. Plants *breathe* the air, and it is through these mouths that they do it; as we cannot live



GEORGE W. DOANE.

without breathing, so it is with the plant; if we were to give it no air at all, it would drop and fade, and gradually die. As long as it lives it never ceases to breathe; these little months are always drawing in the air, and breathing it once again. And the leaves are so full of them that, in every square inch of a leaf, there are as many as 360 of these little pores. In this way all the leaves hang out in the air and the light, and by means of their thousands of mouths, breathe the air into the plant to feed it, as well as helping to keep up the supply of moisture in the air by giving out the water.

One of the most wonderful parts of the plants is the seed. It used to take a seed just four, and put it away for five, ten, or twenty years, and then put it in the ground at the end of that time, it would come up growing just as it would have done if we had sown it when first it was formed. Some years ago there were found a few little grains of corn, and some peas buried with a dead body in Egypt. They were brought to England and sown, and though they seemed quite dry and shrivelled, they sprouted and grew up into fine wheat and pea plants. It was supposed that they had been buried three thousand years before, that is, in the time of Moses. From one poppy seed there would spring in four years enough poppies to cover all that part of the earth which is now inhabited. From one single grain of wheat, it is said that in eight years would grow enough to feed all the millions of people on the earth for half a year.

But when we sow a seed in the ground, how is it that it grows and produces a new plant? The seed dies, but as it dies it gives out life by shooting forth at one end a little tender twig, which grows up stronger and stronger, and pushes through the earth till it shows above it as a little green blade. This goes on growing larger, and putting out stalks, leaves, buds, and flowers, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark iv. 28.) How wonderful it is that from such a little thing as a seed should spring up the large plant! and think of that oak whose heavy trunk rises so high towards the sky, and whose branches spread out so far into the air on either side; and this large tree was entirely formed from one little acorn not one inch in length, which fell into the ground.

How much care and wisdom it requires to keep one little plant alive and well. It has to be supplied with all the necessary food from the soil and the air; and all the little cells with their sap, and the leaves with their mouths must be kept healthy and able to perform their part, or the plant would quickly die. And then think of the thousands of plants there are all over the world, in the gardens and the fields, on the hills and by the hedges, and all these are every moment being kept alive and beautiful by God. Look at Matt. vi. 28. There Christ is speaking to the people, and He says; "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." It is not by any toil or labor of their own that these plants are constantly provided with all they need, and look so beautiful and gay; it is by the continual power and will of God. Then the verse goes on to show that if God cares so much for the poor perishable plants, and bestows so much attention on them, though they will only last for such a little time, and then fade and wither away, and be seen no more, it should make us trust in Him that He will care much more for us His creatures, and provide us with the food and other things which we need when we are of so much more value than they, and are made to live for ever. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven; shall He not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?" When you are anxious, thinking you cannot supply your wants, and have all the things you need; then think of the little flowers, and how God watches over them and cares for them, and remember that if He takes so much care of them, He will surely take as much care of you, and not leave you to want.

MARY.

IMPROVING IN VIRTUE.—The best and most effectual way to improve in virtue is, to correct those faults which are inimicable to virtue, but friendly to vice; in the same manner, we create beauties by removing deformities.

INDOLENCE.—If you ask me which is the real hereditary sin of human nature, do you imagine I shall answer pride, or luxury, or ambition, or egotism? No; I should say, Indolence. Those who conquer indolence, will conquer all the rest.

"I FLIGHT THEE MY TRUTH."

"MARRIAGE is honourable to all." Our pious forefathers did well to call it the "Holy Estate of Matrimony." We do not account it as a sacrament as does the Church of Rome. We know but of two ordinances especially set forth by our Saviour, as identified with Christianity—namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But we are still disposed to regard a marriage service as a very sacred ceremony. It was God—not man—who instituted Marriage; it was God's own Son who said, "It is Cana's wedding feast;" it was God's own Holy Spirit who inspired the beautiful instructions which are given in St. Paul's Epistle to wives and to husbands, and who has condescended to employ the figure of a marriage, suited to set forth the glories of the

redemeed. Do you think of marriage in this light? Do you count the return of your wedding day as a holy anniversary, which you keep, as the good Germans do, your twenty-fifth as a silver, your fiftieth as a golden wedding?

You remember the days when he came wooing. Was it in country parts—did you wander together

when it was all over, such as you had never known before?

Hard times have come since then, and trials, many and sore. But have you ever been true to your vow to do you love him now as you loved him then. Granted he is not what he was. Rough work and a rugged path, worst of all, bad companions and strong drink have changed him for the worse; but you still love, cherish, and obey—is it so? Often the trial is heavy, and you are tempted to give up—tempted to repine—tempted to look with bitterness on your lot, but the old scene in the church has come back to you, the old voices have sounded in your ears, "O, Eternal God, send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in Thy name, that as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant, betwixt them made (whereof this ring given and received is token and pledge) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together." You have looked on your wedding-ring, and your wondering, "troubled heart, has been quieted.

Yes, say you, I have looked on my ring, and remember my vow, but I have had no cause for sorrow.

He has been to me the best of husbands, and we love each other every day more dearly. Thank God for it—give Him the praise—may you live long prosperously and happily together, and when the parting comes, may it be but for a season, may you in God's good time be restored to each other in that land where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.

SUNDAY THINKINGS,

TO

BRIGHTEN WORK-DAY TOILS.

Sunday, 4th September, 1864.

"O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND BOW DOWN; LET US KNEEL BEFORE THE LORD."

—Psalms xvi. 6, 7.

Yes, I will worship God my Maker, my Redeemer. It is meet that the sheep He has sought and found, has laid on His shoulder, and feeds with "His hand," as one brought up tenderly by Him, should love and adore Him. I will worship with my body and my spirit, which are both His. Kneeling down, lowing low before Him, in the worship of His spirit. Heart-spooken prayer is the worship of the spirit.

But how shall I dare come near the presence of the "High and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," and I, who am but dust and ashes, misery, and vile? By the blood of Jesus I am brought nigh to God, I have access into the holiest. He is my High Priest. He has made reconciliation for sins, through the blood of His cross, therefore I come boldly to the throne of grace (Eph. ii. 13; Heb. x. 19-22; Heb. ii. 17; Heb. iv. 14-16; Col. ii. 20).

When I come, what shall I say to Him? I know not what to say, for I am out. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities," asking for us according to the will of God. So I must not pray of my own mind alone, but seek the Holy Spirit's help; praying in the Holy Ghost,"

Jude 20; Eph. vi. 18.

Prayer is the Holy Spirit speaking in our hearts, so as to be heard in heaven; and the Bible is the Holy Spirit speaking from heaven, so as to be heard in our hearts. By these two, Prayer and the Bible, God and man converse together; man speaks, and God answers. This is communication 2 Cor. xii. 14; (See Exodus xxxiii. 11; Numbers iii. 8.) The communication with God daily. It is sweetly solemn to be in the presence of God, speak to, kneel down, and speak to God.

But why should I pray? Why should I tell my wants to God, when He already knows them all? Because by telling Him, I own that He alone can supply them, that He is the possessor of heaven and earth, "is the most high God." And this is worship. So then a day without prayer, is a day without worship, without God; spent like the beasts, who are daily fed by Him, but worship not. They cannot, man will not. "I will worship and praise Thy name." "Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and Thou shalt hear my voice." But while worshipping Him, I comfort my own heart of all its load of cares and griefs and fears, giving them all over into the hand of my Shepherd, who has undertaken the care of me. Oh, the heavy hearts that never unburden them-

"I FLIGHT THEE MY TRUTH."

near the old homestead, beneath the light of the harvest moon? Did you pass many a pleasant hour when the day's work was done—down the green lanes where blackberries and filberts ripen? Do you recall the quiet whisper of love—soft as the breath of summer, sweet as the scent of roses!—ah, me, those words are not to be forgotten. What a happy time it was when he was received at home, and the preparations for your wedding went on bravely with much of harmless mirth. And then the wedding day—what if the wedding were not so grand as the square's, it was just as happy—there were those you loved about you and your heart trembled with joy and your eyes filled with joyous tears, as you placed your hand in his, and repeated after the dear old minister, who has taught you, since you were a little child, the way to heaven. "I take thee to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for rich, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I give thee my troth."

Yes! you felt it was God's ordinance, and you kept reverently in prayer, and felt a quiet happiness



CONFESIONS
OF A FORTUNE TELLER;
OR, THE
HISTORY OF SALLY COOPER.

Edited by the Author of "Recreation and Usefulness."

CHAPTER III.

"DID you see or hear anything more of the lady who took such a sudden fancy for you, Sally?" asked Mrs. Debrett, as the old woman prepared to receive her visitor.

"Oh yes, ma'am," replied Sally. "Her name was Graceley. She and her husband had just come to settle in the neighbourhood, and she was very kind to the poor, visited them in their cottages, and tried to get them to send their children to school."

"Did she come again to your camp?"

"No, ma'am! I do not remember that she did; but one day I met her, and she told me that if I liked to go to school, she would give me a nice new frock and a pinafore, and bonnet; and that if I tried to be a good honest little girl, she would always be a friend to me."

"Were you tempted to go to school, Sally?"

"I just went a few times, ma'am, but I had to run away without letting my mother know where I was going. She could not bear the thought of my getting my head full of book-learning, which she said was all stuff and trash. And indeed, I could not endure to be pent up in a room. I always felt as if I should suffocate, when I was confined within four walls, especially if it was summer time. But Mrs. Graceley was not in the least impatient or angry with me on this account. She often asked me into her house, and gave me fruit and sweetmeats."

"But what did her husband say? Did he become more reconciled to your tribe?"

"I do not think he knew of my going, ma'am. I scarcely ever saw him, as he was away from home a great deal, about some kind of business, and she always told me to go at one particular hour."

"Do you think they continued to believe in gipsy charms and spells?" asked Mrs. Debrett.

"I do not think Mrs. Graceley did," replied Sally. "She used often to talk to me very seriously against lying, and deceit, and sometimes read to me from a large book, which I now suppose was the Bible, about *truth in the inward parts*, and justice, and uprightness, and integrity, and such things. But Mr. Graceley, I am sure, kept his belief in them, and fear of my mother's power to harm him; and this he showed very clearly once when on the magistrate's bench."

Here Sally proceeded to relate that the gipsies were accused of having set fire to some wheat-stacks, and causing the destruction of much property; also of taking advantage of the hurry and confusion, when the neighbouring huts were almost emptied of their contents, to steal various articles of plate and jewellery. They broke up their camp immediately after the occurrence, and, before the next morning dawned, no traces remained of them or their tents, save the ashes left by their fires, and a few fragments, bones, and tattered remains of worn-out garments, too old and ragged any longer to hold together.

Sally's mother and father, however, it appeared, had been absent for a day or two, with Sally, on some private predatory excursion, and, contrary to the expectation of the rest, returned to the scene of the late encampment, only to find it abandoned. It had been expected, by their companions, that they would be returning by the road which they themselves were about to take, and that they should meet them. Such, however, was not the case, and when Sally and her father and mother reached the spot, where they expected to find everybody and everything as they had left it, a day or two before, they were met by a party of constables, who had been sent to see if any of the gipsies remained, with orders to arrest all whom they might find in or near the locality. Thus Sally and her mother and father saw themselves prisoners on a charge of being concerned with others in setting fire to the corn stacks, and pilfering property, which had been hastily removed from premises supposed to be in danger. They had, in fact, been as deeply concerned in the plot as the rest, though owing to their absence, they had taken no part in its execution. Indeed, Sally believed that the scheme had originated with her father. So far as she could recollect, he had had a violent quarrel with the owner of the stacks, and had threatened to be revenged upon him. The latter had, in consequence, prohibited him, or anyone belonging to him, from setting foot on or near his

farm. Previously to this, the gipsy had been employed in various trifling services, such as hunting and destroying vermin, executing little commissions with the knocker, the farrier, or the blacksmith; and his wife and child had been in the habit of receiving broken food, skimmed milk, or old garments, from the farmer's wife. He was now so bitterly offended and enraged against the farmer, that, without explaining the cause of his displeasure, he contrived to excite the treacherous and revengeful spirit of his followers, and get them to promise to help him in his scheme of vengeance. An opportunity for effecting it occurred sooner than had been anticipated, and the gipsies took advantage of it, at once, without awaiting the return of their companion. As we have said, the Coopers were arrested, consigned to prison for the night, and taken before the magistrates next morning.

Upon being questioned, they solemnly averred that they had been away from the neighbourhood, and knew nothing of what had taken place, until they were then informed and accused of the crime. Seeing that their asseverations of innocence produced little effect, they grew desperate; and Polly Cooper, Sally's mother, began to indulge most freely in the art of cursing, in which she was quite an adept.

"The fiend take you all!" exclaimed she, vehemently, "for a lying, proud, malevolent set! You shall remember the day, my five sirs, when you shut up honest people in prison, and turned the key upon them for nothing at all."

"Be still, woman!" exclaimed one of the magistrates, sternly; "It will go all the worse with you if you let your tongue run at this rate."

"Who are you, I wonder, to command me to be still, you insolent son of the old one," returned Polly. "May all the evils of perdition rest upon you! May you, your wife and children, and everything belonging to you, wither and die. May you—"

At that moment the magistrate who was the special object of her malice, was hastily called away by a messenger, who informed him that his presence was required elsewhere. The prisoners were remanded, in order that further evidence might be obtained, and were sent back to their cells.

Upon their next appearance, Mr. Graceley, who had on the former occasion been absent, was seated upon the magistrate's bench. He turned pale at sight of the woman, whose superhuman power, he believed, had first caused, and then cured his wife, and was evidently ill-at-ease, while one of his brother magistrates was reading the notes taken down at the previous examination. Polly Cooper, too, recognised him, and had commented one of her customary tirades, when Mr. Graceley exclaimed:

"Hush, my good woman, stop! It does not appear, from the depositions which have just been read, that either you, or your husband, or little girl, were concerned in this business."

He then turned round and whispered with his brother magistrates, who assented to what he said. "Yes, yes; let them be set at liberty," said the gentleman, who was the special object of Polly's attack the day before. "Send them away at once," he exclaimed, apparently quite relieved at the prospect of getting rid of them, and seemingly a prey to grief, which he subsequently explained, as being caused by the death of one of his children the day before.

Orders were given to liberate the gipsies, but Mr. Graceley sent to speak with them privately, before they quitted the court-house. He then repeated his conviction of their innocence, and assured the woman that it had been at his instance that the other magistrates had agreed to their being set at liberty, instead of being sent back to prison to await their trial at the sessions. It was most evident that he wished to pacify and propitiate his old acquaintance, lest she should carry out the threats which he had previously uttered against him. After talking with her for some time, Mr. Graceley said:

"But my good friend, though you are, as I believe, innocent of this charge, yet I think you can help us to discover the guilty parties, can you not?"

"To be sure I can, if I like," replied the woman; "but it is not likely that I should take the trouble for nothing."

"Certainly not," returned the magistrate. "You shall be well rewarded if you are the means of bringing the offenders to justice. We will send as many of our men with you as you may wish, if you will—"

"Your men, truly! What do I want with your men, do you think? No, thank you! I have invisible agents at my command, and want none of your stupid meddling blockheads, who know no better than to bring up an innocent man, woman, and child, before you."

"Well, well, my friend," said Mr. Graceley, alarmed lest she should indulge in a fresh burst of indignation and abuse, "make use of the means that seem to you the most suitable; only help us to bring the offenders to justice, as soon as possible."

"If my charms do not find them out, Mr. Magistrate, and give them into your power before this time next week, I give you leave to think that a gipsy has no more control over spirits and destiny, than you poor ignorant, awkward, household," said Polly, as she took her departure with her husband and child.

Having regained their liberty, Sally's father and mother hastened to join their companions, from whom they learned all particulars of the fire and theft. All the gipsies felt it very important to divert suspicion from themselves, and turn it into another channel. The scene of their late encampment was centrally and conveniently situated for them, but, of course, could no longer be a safe resort, while the charge against them was generally believed in the neighbourhood. They therefore resolved to lay the blame elsewhere. Polly Cooper enquired through whom, or what it was, that suspicion had fallen upon the gipsies. She was told that Joe Smith, the village tailor, met the men who fired the stacks just as they were quitting the farm-yard, and it was in consequence of his statements, that orders were given to take into custody any gipsies who could be found. With regard to the stolen property, she learned that some of it had already been converted into money, and that the remainder was still in the hands of those who had taken it. They now agreed to carry a portion of it to Joe Smith's garden at night, and there bury it. Then Sally's mother was to call upon Mr. Graceley, and tell him she had discovered, by means of her spells, that the tailor, who accused the gipsies, was himself the guilty party, and that if search was made, some of the plunder would be discovered on his premises, the rest, no doubt, having been already made away with. This diabolical scheme was carried out to the letter. The poor tailor, who was unable to prove his innocence, was, consequently, condemned to suffer the punishment which the wicked gipsies deserved.

Here was then an exemplification of the evils attendant upon superstition. Had it not been that the magistrates were overawed by the gipsy woman's pretended power to harm them by her curses, they would have investigated the case more calmly and patiently, and punishment would have fallen where it was deserved. Not Mr. Graceley alone, but some of his colleagues were greatly alarmed, lest the gipsy's threats would be verified. To the end of his life, the gentleman, to whom such perturbation we have referred, believed that the malediction uttered by Polly Cooper caused the death of his baby. It had been suffering greatly from teething for some time past, when it was seized that day with convulsions and suddenly carried off, just as the gipsy woman uttered her curses upon him and his.

While such foolish credulity reigned among the middle and upper ranks of society, can it excite surprise that a gipsy's predictions were as firmly believed in by the lower classes as the revelations of God himself, and far too frequently, much more seriously studied and reflected upon? Thus it was, in the majority of cases, that such prophecies were made to fulfil themselves. In an instance like that of the death of the magistrate's baby, we can see nothing more than a simple coincidence; but to many others, the person against whom the threat was uttered, would secure its accomplishment by allowing his mind to dwell upon it. In the case of threatened physical illness, anxiety and disquietude are quite sufficient to engender it. Where material misfortune is predicted, the energy and watchfulness that might avert it, are destroyed by faith in the fortune-teller's power; and apathy, and indolence, consequently, produce the effect foretold.

"I suppose you were too young at the time, Sally, to think of the wrong and cruelty of sacrificing an innocent man to screen yourselves," said Mrs. Debrett.

"Oh, yes ma'am! I did not know or trouble myself about it at all; only I well remember that there was great rejoicing and dancing, and singing, when the tailor, or *encumber*, as we called him, in our language, was convicted. One of the verses, I think was:

"We Romps* rejoice in forest free,
Like birds and beasts so light and nimble,
While Sump^t in truth, neath rock and key,
Licks his own finger in its thumb."

"How cruel and wicked of the gipsies thus to mock

* Gipsies. + Prison.

